HEMU

Born in the small town of Rewari, in present-day Haryana, Hemu, a grocer's son, had ambitions that took him beyond his world into the realm of politics, intrigue and war. An ambition that made him Emperor of Delhi.

Hemu's rise to power is a fascinating story. He relied entirely on his own intelligence and intuition. He had to contend with political scheming and treachery in the courts of Sher Shah Suri, Islam Shah and finally Adil Shah. With Humayun and then Akbar making a bid to regain the throne of Delhi, it was up to Hemu to defend it.

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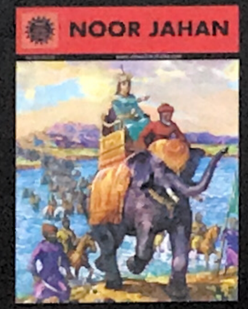

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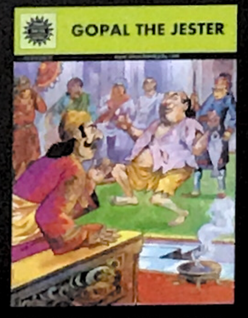

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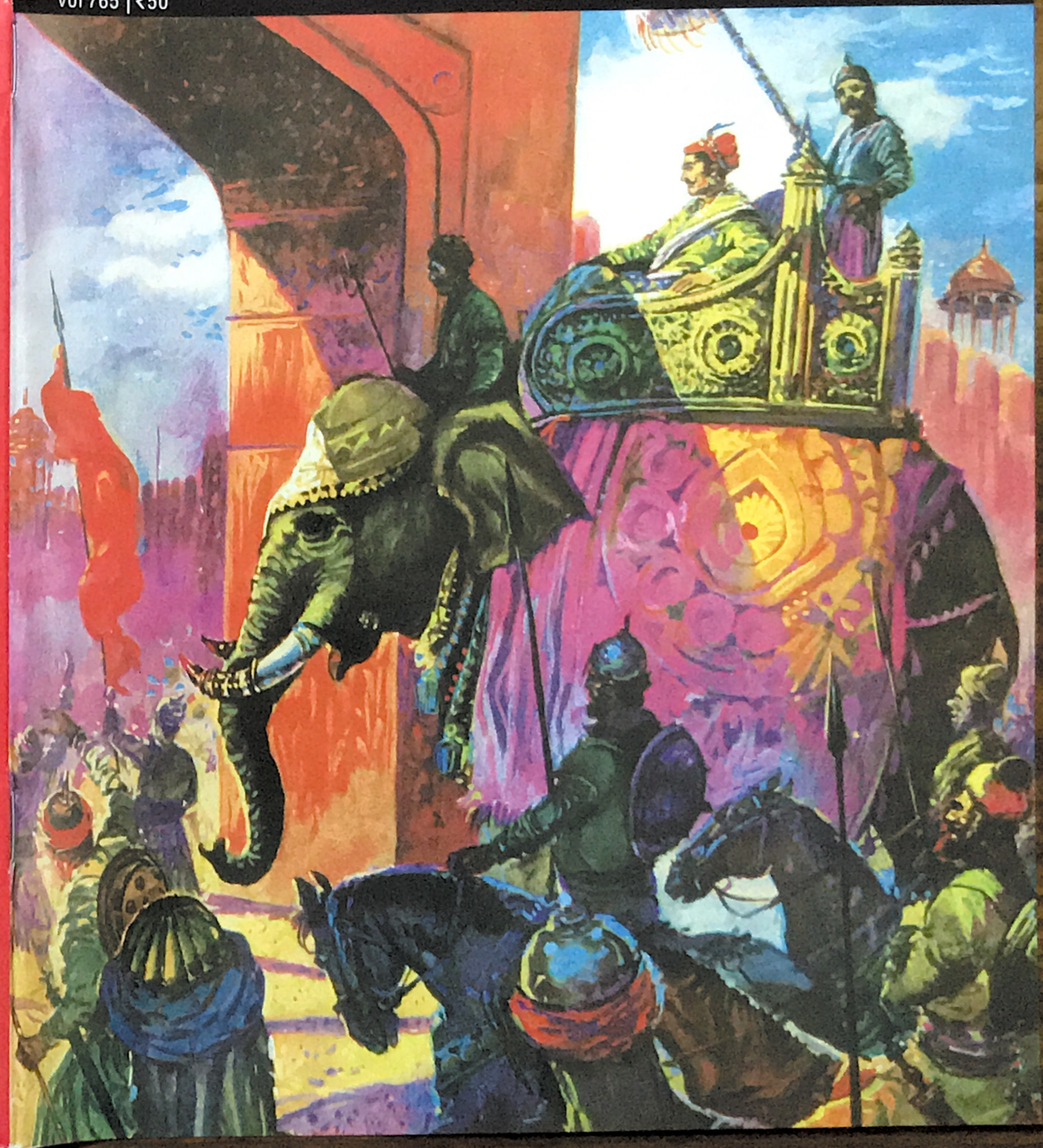


HEMU

HEMU WAS BORN IN A SMALL TOWN CALLED REWARI.* AS HIS FATHER WAS A GROCER, HE WAS BROUGHT UP TO BE A SHOPKEEPER.

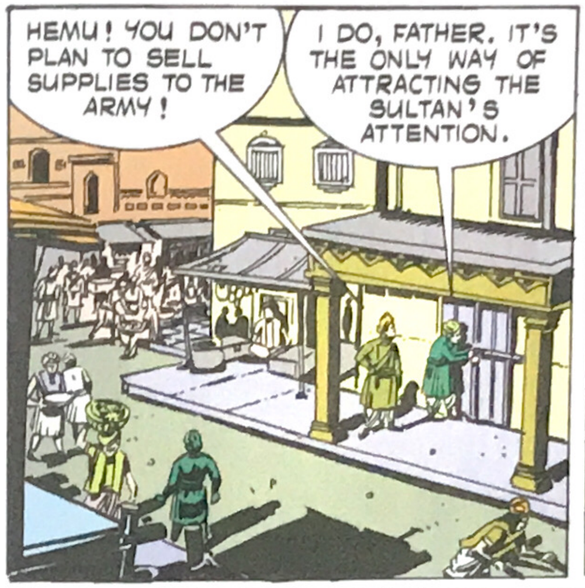
WELCOME, SETHJI. WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU?

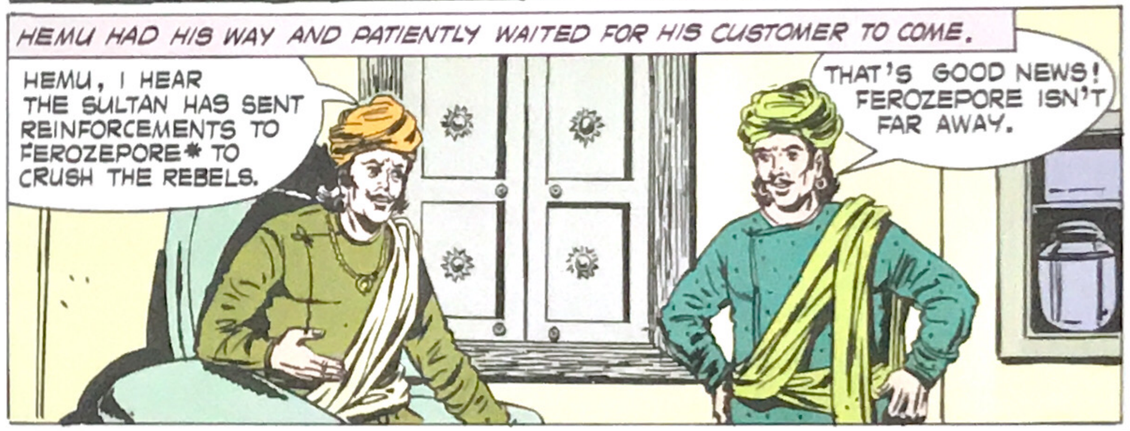
I WANT 200 SEERS OF JOWAR.

HEMU, HAVE 200 SEERS OF JOWAR SENT TO THE SETHJI'S HOUSE.

FATHER HAS NO HEAD FOR BUSINESS. I'LL HAVE TO TAKE MATTERS INTO MY OWN HANDS OR DIE A MISER-ABLE GROCER.

*IN MODERN HARYANA





*IN MODERN PUNJAB—TO THE WEST OF REWARI

WELCOME, FAUJDAR SAHIB.* MAY I HAVE THE HONOUR OF SERVING THE SULTAN AND YOUR NOBLE SELF?

DO YOU HAVE ENOUGH GRAIN TO SUPPLY THE SULTAN'S ARMY?

ENOUGH AND MORE, SIR. I'VE BEEN SAVING IT FOR YOU EVER SINCE I HEARD THE ARMY HAD ENTERED OUR DISTRICT.

YOUR FORESIGHT IS COMMENDABLE!

AS THE LAST SACK WAS CARRIED OUT—

HIS MAJESTY WILL BE PLEASED!

WHY DON'T YOU COME TO AGRA? THE SULTAN COULD DO WITH MEN LIKE YOU IN HIS SERVICE!

THANK YOU, SIR. IT WOULD BE A PRIVILEGE TO SERVE THE SULTAN.

* AN ARMY OFFICER

A FEW DAYS LATER, HEMU SET OUT FOR AGRA.

TAKE CARE, MY SON. LIFE AT COURT IS FULL OF INTRIGUE. DON'T TRUST ANYONE.

I WILL ALWAYS BE VIGILANT, FATHER. DON'T WORRY.

SULTAN ISLAM SHAH, SON OF THE FAMOUS AFGHAN, SHER SHAH, WAS AN ABLE RULER. WHEN HEMU REACHED AGRA, THE SULTAN WAS PLANNING A CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE REBEL GOVERNOR OF THE PUNJAB.

MY FATHER DROVE HUMAYUN* OUT OF INDIA. HE COULD COME BACK IF REBELS WEAKEN THE UNITY OF MY EMPIRE. THIS REBEL MUST BE CRUSHED.

THAT SHOULD TEACH OTHERS NOT TO OPPOSE YOUR MAJESTY'S RULE.

IT SHOULD. BUT WITH THE FAMINE THERE, OUR SUCCESS WILL DEPEND ON OUR SUPPLIES.

YOUR MAJESTY, I KNOW AN ENTERPRISING YOUNG MAN CALLED HEMU WHO COULD GET US ALL THE GRAIN WE'D NEED!

WHERE IS THIS MAN?

* THE SECOND MUGHAL EMPEROR

WHEN HEMU WAS CONDUCTED TO THE SULTAN —

IS IT TRUE THAT YOU CAN GET FOOD FOR AN ARMY ON THE MARCH, IN A FAMINE-STRICKEN REGION?

CERTAINLY, YOUR MAJESTY. OUR LOYAL FARMERS WOULD BE HONOURED IF THEY COULD BE SUPPLIERS TO YOUR MAJESTY'S TROOPS.

VERY WELL. I HEREBY APPOINT YOU SUPERINTENDENT OF BAZARS.

HEMU UNDERTOOK A WHIRLWIND TOUR OF THE KINGDOM.

REMEMBER, THIS GRAIN IS FOR THE GOVERNMENT TROOPS. SO QUOTE ME A FAIR PRICE.

TIMES ARE HARD, AND FOOD IS SCARCE. BUT THE SUPPLIES ARE FOR OUR FIGHTING MEN.

HOW CAN WE REFUSE YOU? WE WILL GIVE YOU ALL WE CAN SPARE.

HEMU PROVED TO BE A RESOURCEFUL MAN AND THE SULTAN TOOK HIM WITH THE ARMY TO THE PUNJAB.

THE SULTAN PAID HIM GENEROUSLY.

THE GROCER, HEMU, NO DOUBT FEEDS THE ARMY. BUT HE FLEECES THE SULTAN.

IT WON'T BE FOR LONG, I ASSURE YOU.

AT THE SULTAN'S TENT —

YOUR MAJESTY, THE REBEL HAS FLED TO KASHMIR.

INSTIGATE THE TRIBESMEN THERE AGAINST HIM.

A FEW DAYS LATER —

THE TRIBESMEN OF KASHMIR HAVE KILLED THE REBEL AND HIS MEN. WE MAY SAFELY RETURN NOW.

YOUR MAJESTY, I SUGGEST WE STAY ON TO BUILD A STRONG FORTRESS HERE...

AND PREVENT FUTURE REBELLIONS? SPLENDID!

SO ISLAM SHAH STAYED IN THE PUNJAB. SOME TIME LATER—

YOUR MAJESTY, A MESSAGE FROM MIRZA KAMRAN...

HUMAYUN'S BROTHER? WHAT DOES HE WANT?

HE SEEKS ASYLUM IN YOUR KINGDOM.

ASYLUM? IN MY KINGDOM?

IT'S STRANGE THAT A MUGHAL SHOULD SEEK ASYLUM IN OUR CAMP.

AN ENEMY'S FOE IS A FRIEND, YOUR MAJESTY. WE COULD TURN IT TO OUR ADVANTAGE.

THE SULTAN WAS INTRIGUED BY HEMU'S REMARK.

TO OUR ADVANTAGE? HOW?

YOUR MAJESTY, MIRZA KAMRAN IS FLEEING FROM HUMAYUN. BY HELPING KAMRAN YOU CAN UPSET HUMAYUN'S PLANS.

YOU ARE SHREWD, HEMU. YOU SHALL LEAD MY SECRET SERVICE.

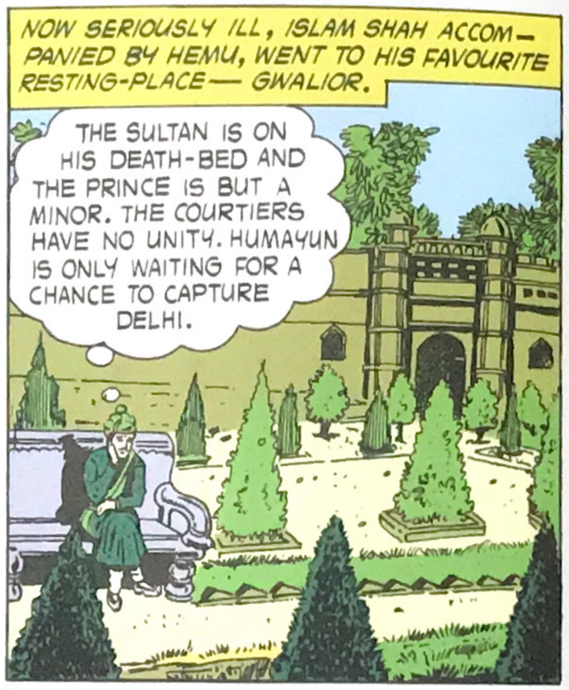
THANK YOU, YOUR MAJESTY.

HAVING STRENGTHENED HIS FRONTIER, ISLAM SHAH CAME TO DELHI, WHERE HE FELL ILL. ONE DAY—

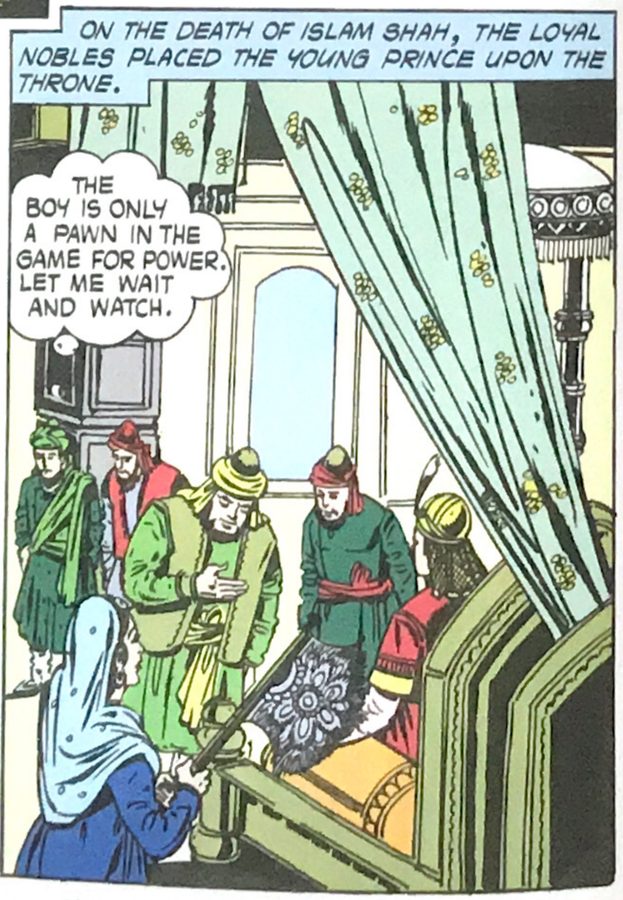
YOUR MAJESTY, HUMAYUN IS BACK. HE HAS REACHED THE INDUS.

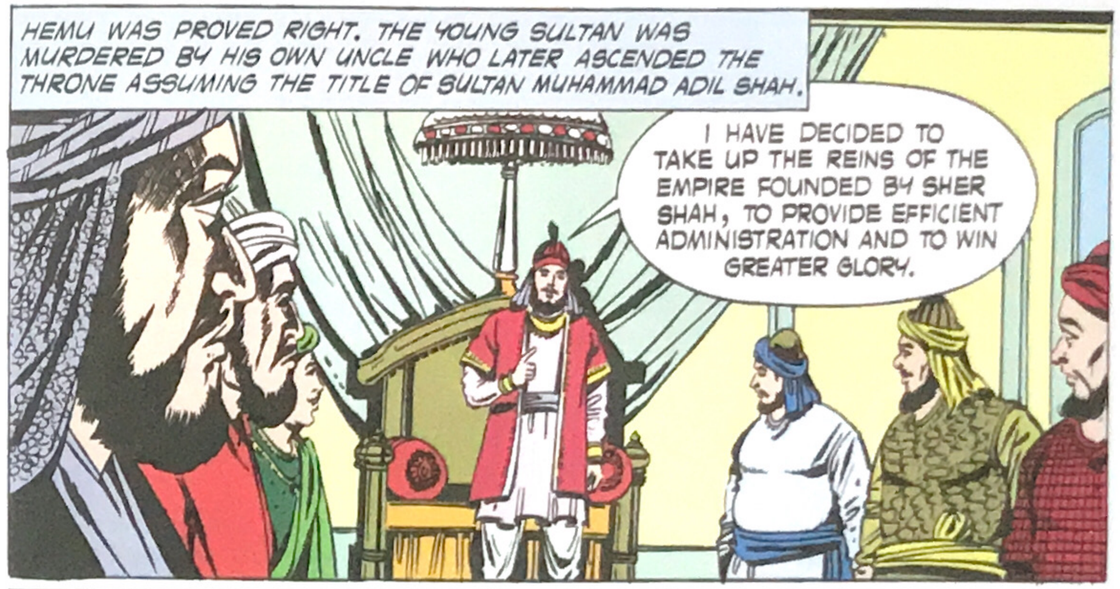
WE'LL DRIVE HIM OUT AGAIN.

THOUGH ILL, THE SULTAN HIMSELF LED HIS FORCES. WHEN THEY REACHED THE PUNJAB—
AS SOON AS HE HEARD OF OUR CAMPAIGN, HUMAYUN RETREATED TO KABUL.
THE COWARD!


NOW SERIOUSLY ILL, ISLAM SHAH ACCOMPANIED BY HEMU, WENT TO HIS FAVOURITE RESTING-PLACE— GWALIOR.
THE SULTAN IS ON HIS DEATH-BED AND THE PRINCE IS BUT A MINOR. THE COURTIERS HAVE NO UNITY. HUMAYUN IS ONLY WAITING FOR A CHANCE TO CAPTURE DELHI.

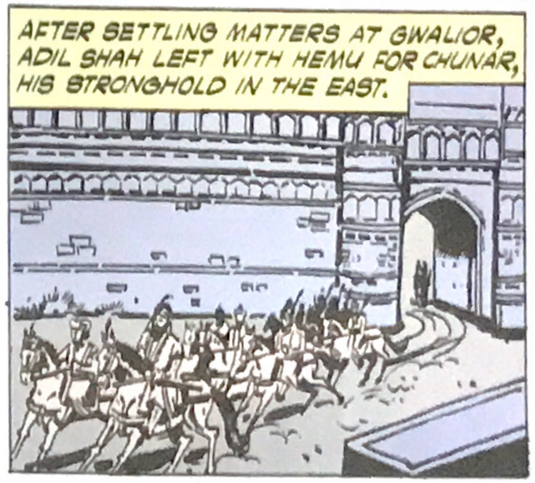
I MUST BE CAUTIOUS. A FALSE MOVE CAN MEAN THE RUIN OF THE EMPIRE AND MY CAREER.

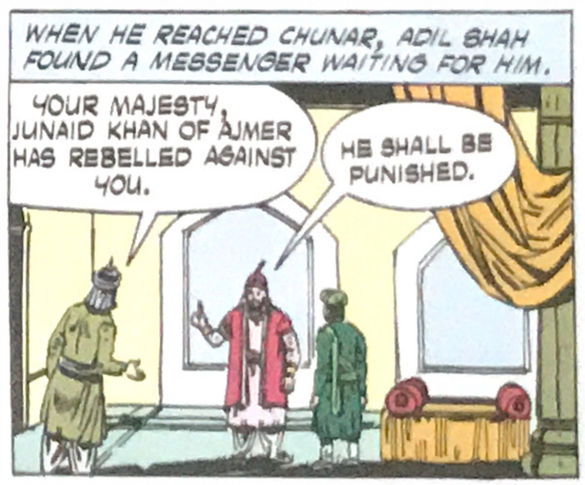

ON THE DEATH OF ISLAM SHAH, THE LOYAL NOBLES PLACED THE YOUNG PRINCE UPON THE THRONE.
THE BOY IS ONLY A PAWN IN THE GAME FOR POWER. LET ME WAIT AND WATCH.


HEMU WAS PROVED RIGHT. THE YOUNG SULTAN WAS MURDERED BY HIS OWN UNCLE WHO LATER ASCENDED THE THRONE ASSUMING THE TITLE OF SULTAN MUHAMMAD ADIL SHAH.
I HAVE DECIDED TO TAKE UP THE REINS OF THE EMPIRE FOUNDED BY SHER SHAH, TO PROVIDE EFFICIENT ADMINISTRATION AND TO WIN GREATER GLORY.

SULTAN ADIL SHAH APPOINTED HEMU AS HIS MINISTER.
I AM DEEPLY HONOURED, YOUR MAJESTY. I SHALL SERVE YOU TO THE BEST OF MY ABILITY.

I KNOW YOU WILL BE LOYAL. BESIDES, YOU, A HUMBLE GROCER, CAN NEVER BE A THREAT TO ME.


AFTER SETTLING MATTERS AT GWALIOR, ADIL SHAH LEFT WITH HEMU FOR CHUNAR, HIS STRONGHOLD IN THE EAST.


WHEN HE REACHED CHUNAR, ADIL SHAH FOUND A MESSENGER WAITING FOR HIM.
YOUR MAJESTY, JUNAID KHAN OF AJMER HAS REBELLED AGAINST YOU.
HE SHALL BE PUNISHED.

HEMU SEIZED THE OPPORTUNITY.

YOUR MAJESTY, ENTRUST ME WITH A SMALL FORCE. I'LL PUT JUNAID KHAN IN HIS PLACE.

BRAVO, HEMU! BUT YOU ARE NO SOLDIER.

MY COMMON SENSE AND INTELLIGENCE CAN LEAD THE SOLDIERS TO VICTORY. GIVE ME A CHANCE AND I'LL PROVE IT.

VERY WELL, HEMU! LET VICTORY BE YOURS.

AT AJMER —

MY LORD, THAT GROCER'S SON LEADS THE SULTAN'S FORCES!

THE VAIN UPSTART! MY GROOMS WILL KNOCK OUT HIS BRAINS WITH THE PEGS TO WHICH THEY TIE THE HORSES.

JUNAID KHAN SENT FOR HIS ABLE GENERAL.

DAULAT KHAN, WIPE OUT HEMU'S ARMY BUT CAPTURE HIM ALIVE. I WANT TO SEE THE TRADESMAN WHO IS ARROGANT ENOUGH TO CHALLENGE ME!

CONSIDER IT DONE, MY LORD!

HEMU'S DEFENSIVE TACTICS MADE DAULAT KHAN BELIEVE THAT VICTORY WAS WITHIN HIS GRASP.

TELL THAT SHOPKEEPER NOT TO MEDDLE IN MILITARY MATTERS. LET HIM RETURN TO HIS WEIGHTS AND MEASURES.

HA! HA! HA!

AT HEMU'S CAMP—

THE TASTE OF VICTORY HAS GONE TO JUNAID KHAN'S HEAD. TOMORROW WE SHALL GIVE HIM A TASTE OF DEFEAT AND BRING HIM TO HIS SENSES.

AT DAWN, THE OPPONENTS MET...

... AND IN THE BATTLE, DAULAT KHAN WAS SLAIN.

VICTORY TO SULTAN ADIL SHAH!

WHEN JUNAID KHAN LEARNT ABOUT THE DEFEAT OF HIS MEN, HE WAS FURIOUS.

PREPARE TO MARCH AT ONCE!

AT HEMU'S CAMP—

THEY HAVE MORE MEN THAN I DO AND MY MEN LIE TIRED AND WOUNDED. BUT I MUST WIN! MY FUTURE DEPENDS ON IT.

FRIENDS, WE CANNOT HOPE TO FIGHT THE ENEMY BY DAY. IF, HOWEVER, YOU CAN MAKE AN EFFORT TONIGHT, WE COULD ROUT JUNAID KHAN'S FORCES.

SELECTING A FEW STRONG MEN, HEMU SLOWLY MOVED TOWARDS THE ENEMY CAMP...

...AND AT NIGHT, WHEN JUNAID KHAN'S FORCES WERE ASLEEP, HE ATTACKED.

THE ENEMY WAS TAKEN BY SURPRISE.

I'D BETTER ESCAPE WHILE I CAN.

A TRIUMPHANT HEMU RETURNED TO THE COURT AT GWALIOR WITH HIS AFGHAN SOLDIERS.

WITH THIS VICTORY, YOU HAVE INDEED PROVED YOUR METTLE, HEMU. THESE ROYAL ROBES ARE YOUR REWARD.

THE REWARD SHOULD BY RIGHT GO TO MY FEARLESS SOLDIERS, YOUR MAJESTY.

LET THE MEN BE RICHLY REWARDED.

BUT THE AFGHAN NOBLES RESENTED HEMU'S GROWING INFLUENCE.

THIS GROCER IS NO STATESMAN. HIS ADVICE TO THE SULTAN, TO SEIZE THE JAGIRS FROM THE POWERFUL NOBLES FOR REDISTRIBUTION, IS DANGEROUS.

WE HAVE NOTHING TO FEAR, TAJ KHAN. WE ARE THE SULTAN'S FAVOURITES.

FIRMULI, YOU'LL SOON BE DISILLUSIONED. AS FOR ME, I AM LEAVING GWALIOR TODAY. WILL YOU GO WITH ME?

NO, TAJ KHAN. I CHOOSE TO STAY HERE.

AT COURT THAT DAY—

KANAUJ IS TO BE HANDED OVER TO SIRMAST KHAN SIRPANI.

KANAUJ WAS THE JAGIR OF MUHAMMED FIRMULI. HIS YOUNG SON, SIKANDAR KHAN, OBJECTED LOUDLY.

OUR ESTATE TO GO INTO THE HANDS OF THE SIRPANI CURS!

MY NOBLE SON! PROTEST LIKE A COURTIER, IF PROTEST YOU MUST!

SIRMAST KHAN SIRPANI APPROACHED THE YOUNG SIKANDAR KHAN.

YOUR WORDS ARE NEEDLESSLY HARSH, MY SON.

THAT'S A CLEVER APPROACH, SIRMAST KHAN!

YOU DON'T LIKE MY WORDS... THEN TAKE THIS!

EVEN AS SIRMAST KHAN FELL, THE OTHER NOBLES POUNCED ON SIKANDAR KHAN.

YOUR MAJESTY, FOR YOUR OWN SAFETY, PLEASE LEAVE THE COURT.

IN THE SCUFFLE, FIRMULI AND HIS SON WERE KILLED.

LATER, HEMU MET THE SULTAN.

FIRMULI'S CLOSE FRIEND, TAJ KHAN KERMANI, HAS LEFT GWALIOR WITH HIS MEN.

HE'S SURE TO MAKE TROUBLE FOR US. WE MUST STOP HIM.

ADIL SHAH SET OUT WITH HIS FORCES IN PURSUIT OF TAJ KHAN.

THE TWO ARMIES MET AT CHHIBRAMAU, 50 MILES FROM AGRA.

TAJ KHAN WAS DEFEATED AND FLED TO KHAVASSPUR TANDA ON THE BANK OF THE GANGA.

YOUR MAJESTY, TAJ KHAN HAS JOINED FORCES WITH HIS BROTHERS.

SOON, THEY WILL WISH THEY HAD NEVER BEEN BORN.

ADIL SHAH MARCHED TO KHAVASSPUR TANDA.

WE SHALL HAVE TO WAIT FOR THE WATERS TO RECEDE.

YOUR MAJESTY, GIVE ME A FEW ELEPHANTS. I'LL CROSS THE RIVER AND TEACH THE REBELS A LESSON.

SPOKEN LIKE A SOLDIER! I APPOINT YOU COMMANDER.

HEMU CROSSED THE RIVER...

...AND TOOK THE REBELS BY SURPRISE.

NO ONE CAN DENY THAT HEMU IS A BRILLIANT STRATEGIST.

THE CUNNING GROCER IS A SHREWD GENERAL TOO.

HEMU'S FORCES DEFEATED THE REBELS AND TAJ KHAN FLED TO BENGAL.

WHEN THE VICTORIOUS HEMU CAME TO CHUNAR—

WELL DONE, HEMU! TAJ KHAN WILL NEVER AGAIN DARE TO DEFY MY AUTHORITY.

BUT THERE WERE OTHER AFGHANS WHO TRIED TO DEFY THE SULTAN. ONE OF THEM WAS HIS OWN BROTHER-IN-LAW, IBRAHIM KHAN.

YOUR MAJESTY, IBRAHIM KHAN HAS TAKEN AGRA AND DELHI AND PROCLAIMED HIMSELF SULTAN.

THE UNGRATEFUL WRETCH! I WILL MYSELF MARCH AGAINST HIM.

WHEN ADIL SHAH REACHED THE YAMUNA, AN ENVOY FROM IBRAHIM KHAN MET HIM.

YOUR MAJESTY, MY MASTER IBRAHIM KHAN APOLOGISES AND BEGS YOUR FORGIVENESS. HE WILL SURRENDER HIMSELF TO YOUR SENIOR GENERALS.

IT'S A RUSE. I MUST WARN THE KING.

DON'T AGREE TO IBRAHIM'S REQUEST, YOUR MAJESTY. WE SHOULD ATTACK AT ONCE.

LET US AVOID A BATTLE IF WE CAN. WHAT HARM CAN THERE BE IN SENDING MY GENERALS?

ADIL SHAH SENT THE GENERALS AND A FEW MEN WITH THE ENVOY.

AS SOON AS THEY REACHED IBRAHIM'S CAMP—

I AM NOW THE SULTAN OF DELHI AND AGRA. ADIL SHAH IS ONLY A PUPPET IN THE HANDS OF THAT COMMON TRADESMAN. WHO WILL YOU FOLLOW?

WE WILL FOLLOW YOU, MY LORD.

AT ADIL SHAH'S CAMP—

YOUR MAJESTY, YOUR GENERALS HAVE DESERTED US.

THE TRAITORS! I NEVER DREAMT THEY'D BETRAY MY TRUST.

AT ABOUT THE SAME TIME, THE GOVERNORS OF BENGAL AND LAHORE DECLARED THEIR INDEPENDENCE. THE EMPIRE BEGAN TO FALL APART.

WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

AGRA IS NOT SAFE AT PRESENT. WE HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO RETURN TO CHUNAR.

IBRAHIM KHAN DID NOT RULE FOR LONG. HE WAS OVERTHROWN BY HIS OWN COUSIN WHO ASSUMED THE NAME SIKANDAR SHAH. WHEN THE NEWS REACHED CHUNAR—

IF WE AFGHANS CONTINUE TO FIGHT AMONG OURSELVES, THE EMPIRE OF SHER SHAH WILL BE REDUCED TO NOTHING.

WE HAVE NEVER NEEDED UNITY MORE. HUMAYUN IS READY TO INVADE HINDUSTAN!

SOON—

YOUR MAJESTY! HUMAYUN HAS DEFEATED SIKANDAR SHAH AND OCCUPIED DELHI.

HEMU, THIS IS THE MOST TRAGIC DAY IN AFGHAN HISTORY. WE HAVE LOST EVERYTHING SHER SHAH WORKED FOR AND WE HAVE NO ONE TO BLAME BUT OURSELVES!

YOUR MAJESTY, WE HAVE ONLY TO BIDE OUR TIME. WE WILL REGAIN DELHI, I ASSURE YOU.

A YEAR LATER—

YOUR MAJESTY, HUMAYUN IS DEAD. HE FELL FROM A STAIRCASE WHILE HURRYING TO SAY HIS EVENING PRAYERS.

AKBAR, HIS SUCCESSOR, IS ONLY A CHILD. YOUR MAJESTY, NOW IS OUR CHANCE TO WIPE OUT THE MUGHALS FROM THE LAND.

YOU ARE RIGHT, HEMU! YOU SHALL LEAD THE EXPEDITION.

WHEN HEMU REACHED AGRA, HE FOUND THE FORT DESERTED BY THE MUGHALS.

THE COWARDS WERE TOO SCARED TO FACE ME, SO THEY'VE TAKEN TO THEIR HEELS!

SOLDIERS AND NOBLES, LET US CLOSE IN ON DELHI AT ONCE AND CATCH THE MUGHAL RATS IN A TRAP.

LEAD ON, HEMU. WE'LL FOLLOW.

AT THE MUGHAL COURT IN DELHI, TARDI BEG, THE GOVERNOR HELD CONSULTATIONS WITH HIS GENERALS.

HEMU IS ON HIS WAY WITH A HUGE ARMY. HE IS OUT TO CRUSH US.

WE CANNOT DEFEND DELHI. WE MUST RETREAT TO THE PUNJAB AND JOIN PRINCE AKBAR.

BUT THIS SUGGESTION WAS VEHEMENTLY OPPOSED.

RUN AWAY EVEN BEFORE THE ENEMY IS SIGHTED! PEOPLE WILL LAUGH AT US.

AND HOW COULD WE EVER FACE PRINCE AKBAR?

TARDI BEG GAVE HIS DECISION.

WE'LL STAY HERE AND DEFEND DELHI. BUT WE'LL KEEP THE LINES OF RETREAT OPEN.

THE MUGHALS WERE FULLY PREPARED WHEN HEMU ATTACKED.

MY MEN ARE LOSING GROUND!

HEMU WAS IN THE THICK OF THE BATTLE, ENCOURAGING HIS MEN.

FIGHT, MEN! FINISH THE MUGHALS! WE WILL TAKE DELHI!

HIS CHARGE ROUTED THE MUGHALS.

THEY HAD TO FLEE, LEAVING, A LARGE NUMBER DEAD.

HEMU KI JAI!

ALL THE MUGHAL WEALTH FELL INTO HEMU'S HANDS.

DISTRIBUTE THE BOOTY AMONG YOURSELVES. FOR THOSE WILLING TO DIE FOR THEIR KING, THE REWARD SHOULD BE HIGH!

LONG LIVE HEMU!

HEMU MADE A TRIUMPHANT ENTRY INTO THE PALACE.

RAJA HEMU KI JAI!

RAJA HEMU? WHY NOT? DELHI BELONGS TO ME. THE AFGHANS ARE FIGHTING AMONG THEMSELVES, AND THE MUGHALS ARE WITHOUT A LEADER.

I SHALL PROCLAIM MYSELF KING AND FOUND A NEW DYNASTY!

ON ASCENDING THE THRONE, HEMU ASSUMED A NEW NAME—VIKRAMADITYA.

MAHARAJA VIKRAMADITYA KI JAI!

HEMU'S FIRST CONCERN WAS TO DEFEND HIS NEW-FOUND KINGDOM AGAINST THE MUGHAL ARMY DESPATCHED BY AKBAR.

THE VETERAN SOLDIER, BAIRAM KHAN, IS LEADING THE MUGHAL SOLDIERS. THIS IS GOING TO BE A DECISIVE BATTLE. IT'S VICTORY OR DEATH.

THAT NIGHT HEMU HAD A NIGHTMARE.

HE WOKE UP SWEATING AND GASPING.

EVERYTHING POINTS TO OUR VICTORY. AND YET I TREMBLE LIKE A FRIGHTENED CHILD!

THE TWO ARMIES MET ON THE HISTORIC PLAINS OF PANIPAT, NEAR DELHI.

JUST AS THE ARMIES WERE ABOUT TO ATTACK, THE LEADING ELEPHANT IN HEMU'S ARMY WAS STRUCK BY LIGHTNING.

A BAD OMEN. WE SHALL BE DESTROYED!

NO POWER CAN DEFY OUR WILL. VICTORY GOES TO THOSE WHO FIGHT FOR IT. TAKE COURAGE AND FIGHT!

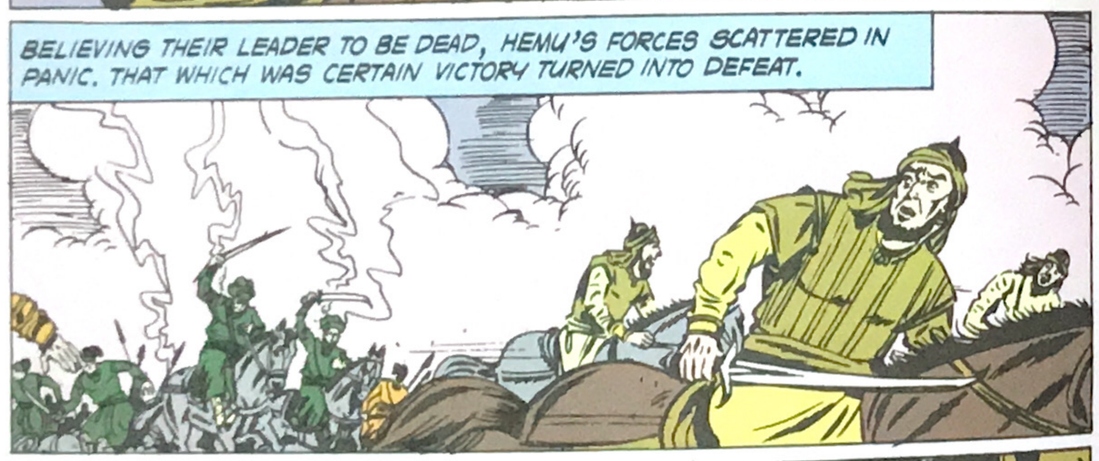
THE SPIRITED CHARGE OF HEMU AND HIS MEN SCATTERED THE MUGHAL FORCES.

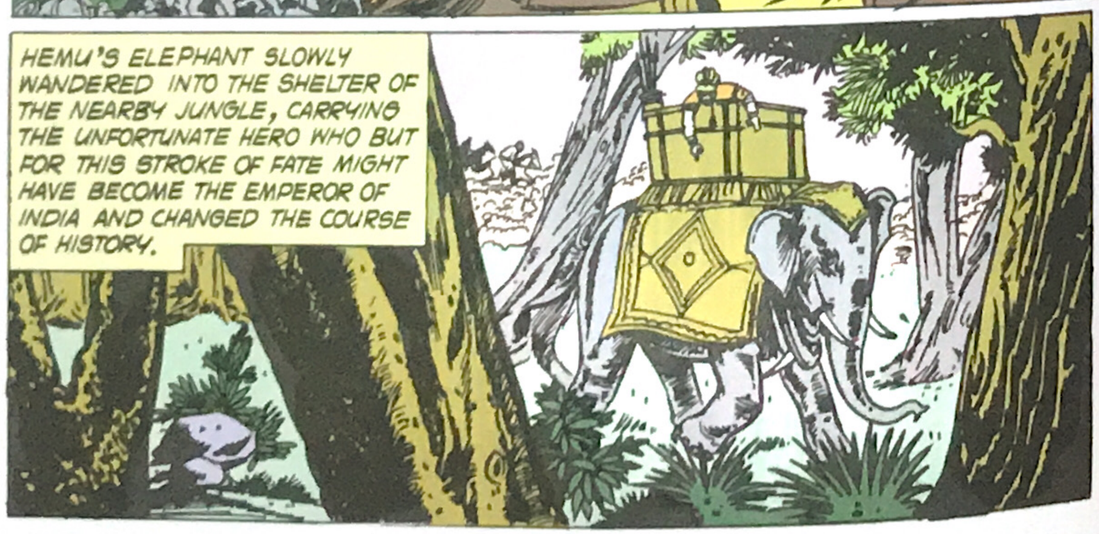
BAIRAM KHAN WAS UNEASY.

ONLY A MIRACLE CAN SAVE US NOW. OR IS THIS THE END OF THE MUGHAL RULE IN INDIA?

JUST THEN A CHANCE ARROW...

...PIERCED HEMU'S EYE. HE SWOONED.





राम ब्रह्म व्यापक जगजाना।
परमानंद परेस पुराना॥

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